



April 2018

**Statement from Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto
regarding priests who father children**

When we enter into solemn lifelong commitments rooted in faith, we are expected to be faithful to them. On their wedding day, married couples vow to be faithful and true to one another in the sacrament of marriage. Similarly, a priest who has consecrated his life to celibacy in the mission of service to God and his people is expected to be faithful to that commitment. Sadly, there are instances when some choose not to be faithful to the sacred commitments which they have made.

Recent media reports have focused on the issue of children of priests who had made the commitment to celibacy. We are gaining a greater appreciation of the pain and sorrow some of these children have experienced. As they tell their own stories, we must authentically listen. These children should be treated with compassion, respect, and loving care.

If a priest is responsible for fathering a child, he is expected to be accountable and to step away from ministry and be engaged in the parenting of his child, as is anyone in such a situation. He should take responsibility for the financial and practical support of his child. If the Archdiocese of Toronto is made aware of such a circumstance, that is the direction we would give the priest involved.

It is always difficult and often painful when someone breaks their sacred vows, whether to monogamous marriage or to celibate priesthood. In all cases, however, it is imperative that those involved take responsibility for their actions. When a child is involved, this is of the utmost importance. I pray that all parents, regardless of their circumstances, devote themselves unreservedly to loving and supporting their children.